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INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 8396
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2569
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 002436

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JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2007

In Today's Papers

Turkey-Iraq Sign Anti-Terror Accord

All papers report that Turkey and Iraq failed to tie an anti-terror accord on Thursday after Baghdad said Ankara must seek its "formal and explicit permission" before sending troops over the border in pursuit of the PKK terrorists. The Iraqi Interior Minister Jawad al-Bolani told reporters they would extend their stay in Ankara until Friday, saying the sides were close to an agreement. The disagreement has been over the clause allowing "hot pursuit," with Ankara saying it has the right under the UN Convention to chase the PKK militants into northern Iraq. Several papers claim that the key clause of "hot pursuit" would be removed from the accord due to the opposition of Kurdish authorities in northern Iraq, with Radikal reporting that the regional Kurdish administration leader Massoud Barzani was in communication with FM Zebari and PM Maliki about the issue.

TV news reports the deal was signed on Friday, with the sides failing to agree on ways that would have let Turkish troops seek terrorists across the border. The two countries pledged to take all necessary measures to fight against the PKK and other militant groups, and they will hold meetings every six months to coordinate their work, according to the deal. Iraqi Interior Minister Jawad al-Bolani told the press after signing the accord with his Turkish counterpart Besir Atalay that the agreement was very important for Iraq, and that his government would do all in its power to implement the measures. Atalay said the sides could not reach agreement on the article regarding border security cooperation, and that negotiations on this issue would continue.

Editorial Commentary on Turkey-Iraq Anti-Terror Deal, Iraq's Division

Fikret Bila writes in mainstream Milliyet: "The Visiting Iraqi delegation in Ankara insists that to sign an anti-terror agreement between the two countries, the right to 'hot pursuit' of PKK terrorists into northern Iraq will be given to Turkey only with

Baghdad's formal permission. Ankara therefore believes the right to chase terrorists would be used, as was the case before, through the UN Convention which gives Turkey the necessary authority...The regional Kurdish administration in northern Iraq's opposition to the agreement will make it impossible to implement. Stalling Turkey, as in the case of the tri-lateral special anti-terror envoy mechanism, will not bring the desired outcome. Both Iraq and the US should be honest in their claims to combat terror, and see that the documents they have signed are enforced in northern Iraq as well."

Mustafa Balbay writes in leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet: "Democratic Senator Joe Biden's bill adopted by the US Senate envisages a loose federal system for Iraq with partition along Shiite, Sunni and Arab ethnic lines, leaving the central government in Baghdad responsible for distribution of oil revenues. Iraq already has a three-party structure in which we see further divisions inside each party. The Shiites in the south, despite their cooperation with Iran, have serious disagreements among themselves. The Sunnis dominate Baghdad and its surroundings, but the Shiites too have sizable populations in the capital. The north of the country seems intact for now but the situation of the Turkmen in the region will be subject to debate. What is more, questions about whether the tribes, the most decisive element of the social structure in Iraq, will benefit from the country's division are to be raised as well. Such seemingly simple questions and problems might bring along even more divisions in a divided Iraq."

Erdogan Addresses Council on Foreign Relations, Meets with ADL and Ahmadinejad in New York
All papers report Prime Minister Erdogan met Anti-Defamation League (ADL) national director Abraham Foxman in New York to discuss Armenian genocide claims. Erdogan later participated in a panel discussion of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) where he said

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attempts to pass the Armenian genocide resolution in the US Congress would "poison" Turkey-US ties. On the question of terrorism, Erdogan said, "PKK attacks deepen the trauma, test the patience of Turkish people and limit the options of the political authority. The US-originated weapons falling into the hands of the terrorists have drawn a strong public reaction in Turkey." Erdogan said that Turkey has commanded NATO forces twice in Afghanistan within the scope of combating terrorism, and that it was preparing for a third time. Yeni Safak reports Prime Minister Erdogan said in response to a question that Turkey would look positively at allowing the US military to withdraw from Iraq through Turkey, after stressing that Washington should set a timeline for withdrawal from Iraq.

Meanwhile, papers report Erdogan met yesterday Iranian President Ahmadinejad to discuss bilateral energy cooperation despite the fact that the US House has decided to toughen sanctions against companies working with Iran. Ahmadinejad told the press after the meeting that there were no problems between the two countries regarding energy issues. Mainstream Milliyet says that after the Erdogan-Ahmadinejad meeting, Secretary Rice gave to Foreign Minister Ali Babacan the message that everybody had to comply with the UN sanctions against Iran.

Babacan Meets Rice in New York
Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others report Foreign Minister Ali Babacan met Secretary Rice on the margins of the UNGA talks in New York. Babacan delivered the message that the PKK terror must be stopped, with Rice confirming that the PKK terror must be stopped not in the region but around the world. Mainstream Milliyet quotes Secretary Rice as saying regarding the Biden Amendment that would divide Iraq into three regions that "we do not support any policy that would lead to the division of Iraq."

Meanwhile, Cumhuriyet and Radikal report Babacan is to kick off a tour of Middle Eastern countries in October including Jordan, Israel and Palestine. The tour is a preparation for the expanded meeting of Iraq's neighbors to take place in Istanbul next month, say papers.

Turkey-Iran to Sign Energy Deal in October

Vatan and Cumhuriyet report that in October, Turkey and Iran are expected to sign the second part of the agreement for energy cooperation. Iranian Oil Minister Gholam Hossein Nozari will visit Ankara in October to discuss the details of a memorandum of understanding on energy cooperation. The Iranian Embassy in Ankara said the document to be signed would list the Turkish and Iranian companies to participate in the implementation of the project. Radikal believes US pressure might force Turkey to suspend plans for an energy deal with Iran. The paper reminds that India was forced to scrap a similar deal with Iran, warning that the deal drafted between Turkey and Iran would be difficult to implement.

Survey: Women Wearing Headscarves Declining in Turkey
Liberal Radikal reports on page one that a public opinion survey conducted by A&G polling company shows the number of women wearing Islamic-style headscarves declined by 2.8 percent in the last four years. The survey was conducted on September 21-23 in seven provinces with 1863 people. More than 73 percent of those polled said headscarf ban in universities should be removed, and only 19 percent think that the headscarf was a political symbol. Mainstream Milliyet, however, points to a different aspect of the survey that 31.4 percent of the interviewees believe that Turkey will be gradually transformed into a moderate Islamic state.

TV Highlights
NTV, 7.00 A.M.

Domestic News

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- New bureaucratic appointments made by President Abdullah Gul are published in the Official Gazette which shows that Gul is approving appointments that had earlier been vetoed by his predecessor Ahmet Necdet Sezer.
- The new legislative year opens in the parliament on October 1, with President Abdullah Gul to deliver the opening speech to members of parliament. Opposition CHP administration has decided to participate in the opening.
- Two soldiers have been killed by a PKK landmine in the southeastern province of Bitlis. In Sirnak on the border with Iraq, four PKK terrorists were killed in fighting with security forces.
- The Times reports Japan Tobacco is poised to offer about USD 1.5 billion for the purchase of the cigarette business of former Turkish monopoly Tekel.

International News

- Defense Secretary Robert Gates has ordered US military commanders in Iraq to review the rules governing contractors' use of arms and to begin legal proceedings against violations of military law.
- After meeting with President Papadopoulos in New York yesterday, U/S Nicholas Burns called on UNSYG to appoint a new special envoy to Cyprus to restart peace talks on the divided island.
- Azerbaijan has shelved a regulation banning the headscarf in universities following growing protests in Baku.
- A survey conducted for BBC World Service shows the Turkish government has failed to meet the expectations of the Turkish public for coping with climate changes.

WILSON